

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 01335 031425Z

43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 IO-11 /087 W

----- 027148

R 021502Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9711

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

USMISSION BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1335

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB XF EG

SUBJECT: EGYPT AND ICATU

SUMMARY: EGYPTIANS, WHOSE INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS (ICATU) APPEARED TO BE SLIPPING LAST YEAR, ARE CURRENTLY OPTIMISTIC OVER CHANCES OF RE-ELECTING EGYPTIAN TO PIVOTAL SECGEN POST AND THEREBY RETAINING CONTROL OF ICATU SECRETARIAT. END OF SUMMARY.

1. LOOKING AHEAD TO ICATU CONGRESS COMING UP IN MARCH IN CAIRO, EGYPTIAN LABOR LEADERS CURRENTLY APPEAR CONFIDENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 01335 031425Z

OF RETAINING SECGEN POST IN ELECTIONS. BOTH EGYPTIAN

LABOR FEDERATION (ELF) LEADERS AND ABDELLATIF BALTIYA, THE EGYPTIAN WHO IS PRESENTLY ICATU SEC GEN, WERE MARKEDLY SANGUINE, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH VISITING REGIONAL LABATT, OVER PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED EGYPTIAN CONTROL OVER ICATU SECRETARIAT.

2. EGYPTIAN OPTIMISM CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH CONCERN HELD IN CAIRO LAST YEAR OVER ABILITY OF EGYPTIAN TRADE-UNIONISTS, AFTER ASSUMING MODERATE STANCE AND BEGINNING TO SEEK OUT CONTACTS WITH WESTERN LABOR, TO MAINTAIN HOLD OVER ICATU WHERE POLITICAL ELEMENTS THEN APPEARED TO HOLD SWAY. THESE

FEARS PROMPTED EGYPTIANS TO ENGINEER A ONE YEAR POSTPONEMENT OF ICATU CONGRESS--UNTIL MARCH 1976--ON OSTENSIBLE GROUNDS THAT CONGRESS SHOULD COINCIDE WITH ORGANIZATION'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY.

3. PRIME REASON FOR EGYPTIANS' NEW-FOUND CONFIDENCE SEEMS TO BE CALCULATION THAT MOST LIKELY RADICAL CHALLENGER FOR SEC GEN POST, MAHMOUD HADID OF SYRIAN, CAN NO LONGER MUSTER MAJORITY OF MEMBER VOTES (ONE ELF OFFICIAL BELIEVES HADID COULD AT BEST GET SIX VOTES, WHICH WOULD BE TWO SHORT OF ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 15 MEMBER VOTES). LAST SEPTEMBER, HADID REACHED APPARENT ZENITH OF HIS INFLUENCE WHEN HE PERSUADED ICATU CENTRAL COUNCIL TO CONDEMN SINAI AGREEMENT (AND, BY DIRECT EXTENSION, EGYPT). WHEN HADID ATTEMPTED TO WIN A SIMILAR PROPAGANDA VICTORY AT EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF PRESIDENTS OF ARAB LABOR FEDERATIONS IN EARLY JANUARY AT CAIRO (DAMASCUS 247 NOTAL), HOWEVER, EGYPTIANS WERE READY FOR HIM AND KEPT DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON LEBANESE SITUATION, WITH WIND-UP DECISION TO CREATE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE HEADED BY EGYPTIAN (BALTIYA).

4. EGYPTIANS, WHO HAVE NOT YET DECIDED ON CANDIDATE FOR SEC GEN POST, WILL PROBABLY END UP BY NOMINATING BALTIYA FOR RE-ELECTION IN ORDER TO ENSURE VICTORY. THUS FAR, ELF LEADERS, WHO ARE CURRENTLY AT ODDS WITH BALTIYA (IN HIS CAPACITY AS MANPOWER MINISTER) OVER DRAFT TRADE UNION LAW PROVISIONS, HAVE BEEN CONTESTING HIS CANDIDACY ON GROUNDS THAT CABINET MINISTER SHOULD NOT RUN FOR TRADE UNION POST. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN UNABLE TO COME UP WITH ALTERNATIVE CANDIDATE POSSESSING EITHER HIS ARAB WORLD PROMINENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAIRO 01335 031425Z

OR HIS ABILITY TO SOUND "RADICAL" WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE IT. MEANWHILE, BALTIYA, PLAYING A WAITING GAME EVIDENTLY EXPECTS THAT IN THE END HE WILL BE THE ELF CHOICE, EVEN IF IT TAKES SOME NUDGING BY GOE AUTHORITIES.

5. TATUS QUO CONSIDERATIONS--THAT ICATU REMAIN HEAD-QUARTERED IN CAIRO AND HEADED BY AN EGYPTIAN SEC GEN--DICTATE EGYPT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH ICATU.

ICATU'S ACTIVITIES, CONSISTING OF PERIODIC CONFERENCES AND OCCASIONAL WORKERS EDUCATION COURSES, APPEAR OF SECONDARY IMPORT TO EGYPTIANS. BALTIYA, IN DISCUSSING ICATU, DESCRIBED IT AS INHERENTLY LIMITED BY THE DIFFERING POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS AND LEVELS OF TRADE UNION EXPERIENCE OF ITS MEMBERS. ITS COMMON DENOMINATOR, HE STRESSED, WAS ARABISM AND ITS POLICY STATEMENTS REFLECTED COMMON ARAB VIEWSON CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES. QUERIEDABOUT ICATU'S EAST-WEST ORIENTATION, HE READILY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SEVERAL AFFILIATES BELONGED TO THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU) AND THAT ICATU ITSELF WORKED WITH WFTU IN ORDER TO PROMOTE ARAB VIEWS. HE HASTENED TO ADD, HOWEVER, THE ICATU WAS NON-ALIGNED AND OPEN TO ARAB LABOR CENTERS WITH WESTERN TIES, RECALLING THAT THE TUNISIANS, AN INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) AFFILIATE, WERE RE-ADMITTED TO ICATU SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND REVEALING THAT HE EXPECTED THE JORDANIAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF AMMAN TO BE VOTED INTO THE SEAT HITHERTO OCCUPIED BY THE DAMASCUS-BASED JORDANIAN EXILE GROUPING AT THE MARCH CONGRESS (1976 AMMAN 8768 NOTAL. ASKED ABOUT ICATU'S FUTURE DIRECTION, BALTIYA SHRUGGED AND SAID THAT WOULD BE UP TO ITS MEMBERS TO DECIDE. EILTS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO01335
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760040-0705
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760293/aaaaddkk.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPT AND ICATU SUMMARY: EGYPTIANS, WHOSE INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION
TAGS: ELAB, XF, EG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006